



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands

Sierra National Forest

HORSES, MULES AND GOOD CAMPING RULES

High Sierra Ranger District

TELLIN' IT STRAIGHT

At one time, wilderness travel was unrestricted with few or no regulations. Increased use and popularity of the Sierra has caused damage to natural resources. To alleviate resource damage, each group of backcountry users needs to be responsible for their actions. "Leave No Trace" is the best way to achieve resource protection. By taking care to protect basic resources and abiding by local rules and regulations, stock users can do their part to reduce impacts on resources and insure continued use of stock in the wilderness.

Camping practices of yesteryear need to be replaced by a land camping ethic that minimizes the impact on nature. As a temporary visitor to the forest or wilderness, you need to leave few imprints on the land to allow the forces of nature to dominate the landscape.

GETTIN' IT TOGETHER

Before you leave home, take a few days to make appropriate plans so your trip will run smoother.

A Wilderness Permit is required for overnight use in the wilderness areas. Wilderness trailheads have quota systems which take reservations, as well as first-come-first-serve. Advance planning will help you enter on preferred dates. Maximum on group size is 15

people and 25 head of stock animals. Contact your local Ranger Station early to inquire about reservations and permits or visit the website at www.fs.usda.gov/sierra.

To help avoid problems, stock should be conditioned for the trail and familiarized with different methods of restraint (i.e. hobbles, hitch lines, bells, etc.) well before the trip to the forest. Pack in stock feed (hay, pellets, cubes, and/or grain) to avoid serious damage to meadow grasses due to overgrazing. As the summer progresses and the ground is more firm, stock can be turned out in the meadow for a few hours each day. To inquire about grazing restrictions contact the local Ranger Station.

ON THE TRAIL

Cutting across a switchback begins a path for soil erosion and may encourage others to follow. Please keep stock on trails.

Purify all water before drinking to avoid contracting Giardia and bacterial dysentery by using halozone or iodine tablets. Boil for 10 minutes or by using a filter system. To be effective, filters need to remove particles as small as one micron in diameter. For emergencies where chemical disinfecting is necessary; use an iodine based product because iodine seems more effective than chlorine. If possible, filter or strain the



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water first, wait a minimum of 30 minutes before you drink the water. If the water is cold or cloudy wait at least an hour or use more iodine. It is best to take a supply of water from home.

To dispose of human waste, select a screened spot at least a 150 feet away from any trail, camp, lake, or stream. Dig a hole 6 to 10 inches deep. After use, fill the hole with loose soil and tamp the soil in place. Do not establish latrine sites because they place an intense burden on the biological decomposers.

CAMPSITE SELECTION

Selecting a good wilderness horse camp takes care and consideration. Campsites should be located 100 feet or more from lakes, streams, trails, and meadows. This helps prevent water contamination, loss of bank vegetation and meadow grasses. Camping away from meadows keeps grassy areas available for wildlife.

Choose a campsite that retains solitude for yourself and others which will give you freedom from intrusion of urban-type sights, sounds and odors. As a general rule, the best campsites are away from water on higher ground. This makes the site drier, warmer, and less popular for mosquitoes.

Select a site where a hitch line (i.e. lash or halter rope tied between trees) can be located on firm, dry ground. Using hobbles is another way for restraining animals. Both will avoid problems of soil disturbance and root damage.

Rearranging rocks and twigs is okay to accommodate your sleeping arrangements, but remove all traces of your presence before leaving your campsite.

CAMPFIRE AND LITTER

Firewood is scarce in the higher elevations, so the use of gas stoves is encouraged. Fire rings, blackened rocks, and camping trash are a blight on the natural environment. If you must use a fire ring, build a small one and then return the rocks blackened side down in their natural positions before departing.

To make sure your fire is completely out, pour water over the coals and ashes; stir with a stick until the coals are cool to touch.

Litter and food scrapes are unsightly and create an artificial food source which can alter the behavior and distribution of many wildlife species. "Leave No Trace" by packing out cans, bottles, metal foil, feminine hygiene products, disposable diapers and unused food.

PACKIN' UP AND HEADIN' HOME

Take a few minutes to naturalize your camp. Scatter manure, refill holes dug by stock, and remove any trace left by others such as rails, bailing wire, rope or deer racks. Pack out everything you pack in. Do not bury garbage! Take pride in how well you "Leave No Trace".

DESIGNATED HORSE CAMPING SITES:

Bass Lake Ranger District (559-877-2218)

Kelty Meadow Campground
Texas Flat Group Campground
Bowler Group Campground
Granite Creek Campground

High Sierra Ranger District (559-855-5355)

Badger Flat Family Campground
Mono Hot Springs Tourist Pasture
Mono Creek Trailhead at Edison Lake

There are dispersed areas located throughout the Forest that are popular with horse campers.

All Are Welcome

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